

COOL CALM AND COLLECTED

by Hilary Gelson

Over 100,000 food freezers were sold in Great Britain last year, and by 1974 annual sales are expected to reach 300,000 cabinets. The simplicity of home freezing as a method of storing fresh food safely and conveniently is one of the main factors in the astounding growth of this industry, but recent research has revealed that the majority of housewives are still remarkably unaware of the basic function and use of a home freezer in day to day family catering. Last year, a leading distributor of frozen foods in this country decided to take a closer look at the situation and the results of the investigations showed that very few women understand the benefits of temperature-controlled food storage—what it is, how it works and how it can be used to the best advantage. The following discussion, therefore, is based on some of the most frequent inquiries sent in to the Domestic Information Department at the Electricity Council and it should dispel some of the confusion that still exists over the problems of buying, installing and running a home freezer today

local electrician. Also condensation can be a problem during the winter months so it is advisable to stand the freezer on blocks to avoid rust occurring underneath the cabinet.

I cannot decide whether to buy an upright freezer or a chest design. What would you advise?

This issue is hotly debated as there are advantages to buying both types of freezer. Upright designs have to be defrosted more often than chest freezers (about every six months) but they are more convenient for loading and unloading. The smaller models can also be installed more easily in the kitchen since they can either be hung on the wall, fitted under an existing work surface or kept in a redundant storage area such as the lower part of a cupboard or larder. Chest freezers, on the other hand, only need defrosting about once a year: they hold the cold air better and are therefore slightly more economical to run.

Before buying a chest design, however, it is important to check that you can reach the base of the cabinet, since packing and cleaning the interior can be difficult for a short person. Nowadays, removable baskets or trays are sold with most models, which makes loading and unloading much easier.

I have a refrigerator with a three-star freezing compartment. Can I use it for freezing fresh food?

It is unlikely, unless the freezing compartment operates at a temperature below 21°C. If you are not sure about this, you can take a temperature reading with a freezer thermometer—they cost about 10s. from most department stores.

N.B.: The frozen food compartment of a domestic refrigerator is designed specifically for storing commercially frozen foods. The length of storage time

We are a family of four—two adults and two children. What size of freezer should we buy and how much will it cost to run?

As a basic guide, you should calculate two cubic foot a person, plus two cubic foot extra. This means that you should buy a 10, or preferably 12 cubic foot freezer, in order to take advantage of buying frozen food in bulk quantities. Running costs: Each cubic foot uses between 3d, and 4d, worth of electricity a week, which would mean that the weekly running cost of a 12

cu. ft. freezer would be around 3s. 6d. It is therefore important to make sure that you use your freezer to capacity. For example, nowadays you can save as much as 3s. 6d. on a 4lb. packet of frozen peas; 4s. 6d. on 4lb. of sliced green beans; 5s. 3d. on a pack of 60 fish fingers and 10s. on a gallon tin of ice cream.

Is it advisable to install a freezer in a garage? Our kitchen is far too small and there is no other space available inside the house.

A freezer can be kept anywhere provided that the location is cool and dry. A garage is an ideal solution, if space is at a premium inside the house, but you must consider the question of electricity carefully. If there is only an electric light point in the garage, you should install a separate three-pin socket outlet for the freezer; otherwise the lighting circuit could become dangerously overloaded. This will cost between £8 to £10, according to the length of cable required and the avarice of your



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